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SUBJECT: LAVALAS CONFIDENT OF VICTORY, BUT WARY OF CEP

¶11. (C) SUMMARY. Lavalas leaders Yvon Feuille, Louis Gerald Gilles, Rudy Heriveaux, Sorel Francois and Jonas Coffy told Poloffs on October 13 that they are confident of a Marc Bazin victory in the upcoming elections. They believed that success in the Departments of the North (Cap-Haitien), Northeast (Fort Liberte) and West (Port-au-Prince) would secure enough votes for Bazin to win, followed by Simeus and Preval. They expressed enthusiasm for a Bazin presidency with Simeus as Prime Minister. The leaders were dismissive of the chances of several other candidates, including Leslie Manigat, Evans Paul and Charles Henri Baker. While confident, they nevertheless asked Poloffs for a myriad of assistance, including a Lavalas seat on the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) and financial assistance for campaigning. The leaders asserted that Serge Gilles' Fusion party manipulates the CEP through its sponsored member Rosemond Pradel. They claimed that the CEP left off over 75 percent of the qualified Lavalas legislative candidates from the initial list of approved candidates, but they affirmed that Lavalas would still win around 15 of 30 Senate seats and 40 of 100 Deputy seats. The leaders were confident that the legislative branch would be composed largely of Fusion, Tet Ansant (supporting Dumas Simeus), and Lavalas. END SUMMARY.

Bazin will win...

¶12. (C) Gilles and Feuille were confident that Bazin would win, despite his previous failure against Aristide in 1990. Feuille said that the race would be decided among Bazin, Simeus and Preval. The key to a Bazin victory, according to Heriveaux, is success in the North and in Port-au-Prince. Gilles admitted that Lavalas has problems in the Artibonite department, where Simeus and Preval are both strong. Simeus and Preval could, however, wind up splitting the Artibonite vote to the benefit of Bazin. Nevertheless, Gilles said that a Bazin-Simeus runoff is agreeable to them, and that a Bazin presidency with Simeus as Prime Minister would be good for Haiti. They were dismissive of the chances of the other candidates of both the right and left.

...unless the CEP cheats

¶14. (C) Heriveaux feared that while Lavalas would win the vote, Serge Gilles' Fusion party might wind up winning the election. He was referring to a widely held belief that certain members of the CEP, most notably Secretary General Rosemond Pradel, are working behind the scenes to ensure a Fusion victory no matter what the vote indicates. (NOTE: the CEP has since reorganized with Pradel forming a part of the executive subcommittee. END NOTE.) As evidence, Sorel Francois cited the fact that initial candidate lists published by the CEP conspicuously omitted all but two of Lavalas' 18 senatorial candidates and almost all of their deputy candidates. As justification for these omissions, the CEP indicated that the candidates' files were missing key documents, in particular the financial good conduct disclosures from persons who had previously held office. Sorel Francois stated that the CEP had simply discarded these documents. The leaders have received assurances that their candidates will be on the final lists. Nevertheless, Heriveaux implored Polcouns to be vigilant with respect to the CEP.

More Problems

¶15. (C) Sorel Francois asked if the USG could help with funding from UNOPS for the Lavalas campaign, stating that Bazin has financial problems that could hurt his campaign. Polcouns replied that Lavalas is one of the parties that UNOPS will be supporting, but pointed out that the UNOPS package is technical assistance, not cash. Feuille also asked Polcouns to intervene with the IGOH to reactivate Radio Ti Moun, the Lavalas radio station that was shut down after Aristide's departure. Pol FSN asked the group whether certain candidates will cause trouble if the elections do not go their way. They unanimously responded that Evans Paul, Guy Philippe and Dany Toussaint can be counted upon to agitate, possibly violently, if their campaigns are unsuccessful. Sorel Francois also stated that Lavalas would not be able to participate if the CEP continued to obstruct a

large part of their candidates.

The Future

16. (C) Once the discussion veered away from the elections into speculation about a Bazin administration, Emboff cautioned them not to make the same mistakes as the previous administration. He stated that Aristide's second administration had failed because he had not respected the international donors, he had not maintained transparent fiscal policy, he had riddled his administration with drug traffickers, and Lavalas had cheated on an election that they would have won anyway. The leaders concurred and made reference to the fact that any Lavalas government cannot control the entire legislature after this election. Francois stated that the winning parties will have to build coalitions. Feuille also made reference to another impending problem, the poor state of relations with the Dominican Republic. Gilles and Heriveaux said that the poor relations are due in part to Haiti's complete inability to control the border.

17. (C) COMMENT. The CEP and IGOH have assured us that a substantial number of candidates excluded in the first scrub will be reinstated. Post will closely review the final list of approved national candidates to ensure that there is no anti-Lavalas bias. It was encouraging to hear these men, usually so single-mindedly obsessed with power, start to discuss constructive governance rather than overwhelming victory. Gilles has previously advocated the creation of a &new elite&8, presumably to replace the old elite, but his colleagues seem to understand the need to work with the business class. Gilles deferred more than usual to his colleagues and was the first to invoke Bazin, saying "he is my candidate". It appears he has rejoined the fold and will not follow through on his presidential aspirations. END

COMMENT.

CARNEY